

V. REMARKS

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment: a) places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; b) does not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration because the Amendment amplifies issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and c) places the application in better form for appeal, should an Appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary and was not earlier presented because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. The amendments to the subject claims do not incorporate any new subject matter into the claims. Thus, entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-13 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Muir et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0192090) in view of Seitz (WO 00/49332). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Muir teaches a gaming machine display which includes a game playing arrangement mountable in a cabinet of a gaming machine and an electronically controlled display element overlying the game playing arrangement, in use, so that, depending on a state of the display element, the game playing arrangement is visible through the display element. The game playing arrangement includes a mechanical symbol-carrying arrangement. The symbol-carrying arrangement has a set of rotatable mechanical reels with a plurality of symbols being arranged on an outer periphery of each reel. The display element has a display screen overlying the game playing arrangement. The display screen is a multi-layered structure that includes a monitor on which images are to be displayed. The monitor overlies a shutter mechanism. The shutter mechanism is an electronically controlled device that is controllable to vary between a transparent state, in which the game playing arrangement is visible through the device, and at least a partially opaque state, in which the game playing arrangement is at least partially occluded. A monitor housing

defines a plurality of openings with one opening being associated with each reel and a part of the outer periphery of each reel being visible through its associated opening.

Seitz discloses a LED backlighting apparatus. A lighting assembly for use in backlighting a liquid crystal display includes a plurality of light emitting diodes disposed on a circuit board and arranged into a matrix configuration having a plurality of rows. The LED arrangement for each row of the matrix is staggered relative to the LED arrangements for adjacent rows of the matrix.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a variable display device and an electric display device. Claim 1 recites that the variable display device is in a form of a plurality of reels operative for rotating about a common axis of rotation with each reel having a plurality of symbols extending about an outer periphery of the reel and the electric display device is disposed in front of the variable display device in a forward direction. Claim 1 also recites that the electric display device includes an electric display device frame, a flat electric display panel for displaying an image, the electric display having a flat back face, a light guiding plate and an illumination device. Further, claim 1 recites that the light guiding plate is disposed apart from yet adjacent to the back face and between the electric display panel and the variable display device with the light guiding plate having an opposing pair of flat surfaces and a plurality of contiguous side faces extending therebetween and peripherally about the pair of flat surfaces. Also, claim 1 recites that the light guiding plate is operative for guiding light entered from at least one side face thereof to the back face of the electric display panel so as to irradiate the light with the light guiding plate having a plurality of openings corresponding to the plurality of reels for showing forward-most ones of the symbols therethrough.

Additionally, claim 1 recites that the illumination device illuminates the electric display panel from therebehind and the illumination device includes a plurality of light emitting diodes aligned continuously along and adjacent to the at least one side face of the light guiding plate. Furthermore, claim 1 recites that the electric display device frame has a frame peripheral portion and a frame front portion connected to and

extending perpendicularly from the frame peripheral portion, the frame front portion defines a frame opening through the electric display device frame, the frame peripheral portion and the frame front portion form an electric display device receiving recess sized to receive the electric display panel, the light guiding plate and the illumination device such that the frame front portion and the electric display panel contact each other and the frame peripheral portion surrounds the electric display panel, the light guiding plate and the illumination device with the plurality of light emitting diodes being disposed between at least a portion of the frame peripheral portion and the at least one side face of the light guiding plate.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 1 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest an electric display device frame that has a frame peripheral portion and a frame front portion connected to and extending perpendicularly from the frame peripheral portion, the frame front portion defines a frame opening through the electric display device frame, the frame peripheral portion and the frame front portion form an electric display device receiving recess sized to receive the electric display panel, the light guiding plate and the illumination device such that the frame front portion and the electric display panel contact each other and the frame peripheral portion surrounds the electric display panel, the light guiding plate and the illumination device with the plurality of light emitting diodes being disposed between at least a portion of the frame peripheral portion and the at least one side face of the light guiding plate. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 3, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a variable display device in a form of a plurality of reels operative for rotating about a common axis of rotation with each reel having a plurality of symbols extending about an outer

periphery of the reel and an electric display device disposed in front of the variable display device in a forward direction. Claim 3 recites that the electric display device includes an electric display device frame, a flat electric display panel for displaying an image, the electric display having a flat back face, a flat diffusion sheet disposed apart from yet adjacent to the back face of the electric panel with the diffusion sheet having a plurality of diffusion sheet openings extending through the diffusion sheet and corresponding to the plurality of reels for showing forward-most respective ones of the symbols therethrough and an illumination device. Claim 3 recites that the illumination device includes a flat plate-shaped board and a plurality of light emitting diodes provided in a plurality of rows and columns to form a matrix on a surface of the plate-shaped board with the plurality of light emitting diodes opposing the back face of the diffusion sheet. Also, claim 3 recites that the illumination device has a plurality of illumination device openings extending through the surface of the plate-shaped board and corresponding to the plurality of diffusion sheet openings and the plurality of reels for showing forward-most ones of the symbols therethrough.

Also, claim 3 recites that the diffusion sheet is disposed between the electric display panel and the illumination device and the illumination device is disposed between the diffusion sheet and the variable display device. Further, claim 3 recites that the electric display device frame has a frame peripheral portion and a frame front portion connected to and extending perpendicularly from the frame peripheral portion, the frame front portion defines a frame opening through the electric display device frame, the frame peripheral portion and the frame front portion form an electric display device receiving recess sized to receive the electric display panel, the diffusion sheet and the illumination device such that the frame front portion and the electric display panel contact each other and the frame peripheral portion surrounds the electric display panel, the diffusion sheet and the illumination device.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 3 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest an

electric display device frame that has a frame peripheral portion and a frame front portion connected to and extending perpendicularly from the frame peripheral portion, the frame front portion defines a frame opening through the electric display device frame, the frame peripheral portion and the frame front portion form an electric display device receiving recess sized to receive the electric display panel, the diffusion sheet and the illumination device such that the frame front portion and the electric display panel contact each other and the frame peripheral portion surrounds the electric display panel, the diffusion sheet and the illumination device. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 3 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 4 is directed to a game machine that includes a variable display device in a form of a plurality of reels operative for rotating about a common axis of rotation with each reel having a plurality of symbols extending about an outer periphery of the reel and an electric display device disposed in front of the variable display device in a forward direction. Claim 4 recites that the electric display device includes:

a flat electric display panel for displaying an image with the electric display having a flat back face,

a light guide plate disposed apart from yet adjacent to the back face of the electric display panel and between the electric display panel and the variable display device with the light guiding plate having an opposing pair of flat surfaces and a plurality of contiguous side faces extending therebetween and peripherally about the pair of flat surfaces, with the light guiding plate operative for guiding light entered from at least one side face thereof to the back face of the electric display panel so as to irradiate the light and with the light guiding plate having a plurality of light guiding plate openings corresponding to the plurality of reels for showing forward-most ones of the symbols therethrough,

an illumination device illuminating the electric display panel from therebehind with the illumination device including a plurality of light emitting diodes aligned continuously along and adjacent to the at least one side face of the light guide plate, and

a reflection plate disposed between the variable display device and the light guiding plate for reflecting light emitted from the emitting diodes on the light guide plate to the electric display panel with the reflection plate having a plurality of reflection plate openings extending therethrough and corresponding to the plurality of light guiding plate openings and the plurality of reels for showing forward-most ones of the symbols therethrough.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 4. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest a reflection plate as recited in claim 4. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 4 is allowable over the applied art.

Support for the proposed amendments can be found in Figures 3 and 12.

Claims 8 and 11 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 9 and 12 depend from claim 3 and include all of the features of claim 3. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 3 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 5-7, 10 and 13 depend from claim 4 and include all of the features of claim 4. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 4 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

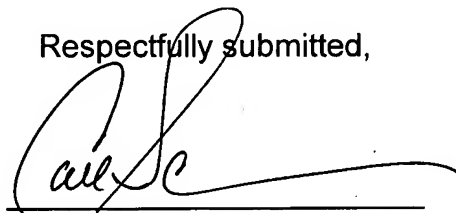
Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to submit those other reasons and to argue for the patentability of claims not explicitly addressed herein in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

By:


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